

## PROSPERO'S CHILDREN – SCRIPT EXTRACTS

### EXTRACT 1

#### ARIEL

I am the glittering, wave-crest gleaming light;  
The dune grass moan, the sea-bird screech am I  
Not flesh and blood, but light, and liquid air  
With thud of tides for heartbeat, and for breath,  
The deep sea's sigh. For I... am Ariel –  
Restless, imprisoned spirit of this place.

I come to grow a story in this soil.  
Of storms at sea, and in the hearts of men  
Of ancient wrongs and grudges bottled up –  
First, let your mind grow wings and fly with me  
Skim over years, and over waves of time.  
Imagination-feathered, rise and wheel  
Above the dizzy masts of a fine ship.  
See how she nods her proud, Imperious way,  
Her swan-like throat laced with foam finery,  
Her white sails breathing majesty and power  
See, on her deck, two brothers, noblemen

DAD "IMPROVISES" THE FOLLOWING SCENE WITH PUPPETS IN THE PUNCH  
AND JUDY BOOTH

#### ARIEL

Hear what they say, remember every word  
For from their talk our story grows its roots,  
And these young nobles are its first green shoots!

NOW SHE MOVES, AND BECOMES THE THIRD DAUGHTER, ANNIE, LYING IN  
THE SUN. DAD ACTS OUT THE FOLLOWING SCENE THROUGH THE PUPPETS

#### ANTONIO

Prospero!

#### PROSPERO

Antonio

#### ANTONIO

Oh, a book!  
*What* a surprise! I have some documents

That need the ducal seal.

PROSPERO

Just leave them there.

ANTONIO [POINTEDLY]

No thanks. I'll wait.

PAUSE.

ANTONIO

They must be signed today...

PROSPERO

I'm busy!

ANTONIO

Busy, Prospero?! With WHAT??!

Your mystic spells? Your precious magic books?

PROSPERO

Bound up within these books are ancient powers  
That harnessed and controlled would make our state  
The envy of the world!

ANTONIO

Yes. So you say.

PROSPERO

They'll take some time to fathom out of course –  
But hidden here are skills beyond our dreams –  
Mystical words that spoken would split clouds  
And drench parched fields with soft, sweet, welcome rain:  
Charms that could cure disease – Antonio, *think*  
A happy people, fed and strong – protected too  
By secret symbols carved on city walls  
The pharaohs used them – look...

ANTONIO (pushing the book aside)

Pie in the Sky!

The people can't eat dreams. They need a Duke  
Preferably one with both feet on the ground  
You've been too *busy* to have noticed this  
But all around you things are breaking down -  
Slithering crime infests our city streets  
And while all crumbles where are you? Nose deep  
In books of mumbo-jumbo sorcery!

PROSPERO

How dare you lecture me! Are you in charge?  
You think you'd run things better than I do?

ANTONIO

I must admit, the thought had crossed my mind.

PROSPERO

I am the Duke. There it begins and ends.

ANTONIO

The ship of state cannot be left to drift -  
You dream your dreams, explore your mystic arts  
I wish you joy - but let me take the helm.

PROSPERO

Never!

ANTONIO

If you won't give – then I must take!

ANTONIO PUPPET TIES UP PROSPERO PUPPET.

PROSPERO

You'd kill me? Traitor!

ANTONIO

Kill you? Not at all.

I'm not a monster. There's a little boat -  
With some supplies, - your books of course... Who knows,  
Their magic might lead you to land – one day!

THE CROWN CHANGES HEADS.

PROSPERO

A crown is just a zero made of gold.  
Wearing it doesn't make the man a duke.

ANTONIO

That's just what I've been trying to say to you.  
The wind is changing. And your boat awaits.

PROSPERO

Miranda. What of her? What of my child!?

ANTONIO

Entrust my niece to me... Don't be alarmed.  
I'll raise her as a duchess. It's her right.

PROSPERO

Never. She comes with me.

ANTONIO

She's two years old.  
An open boat? She wouldn't last a day.

PROSPERO

Better she die with me than live with you.

ANTONIO

Give me the baby...

PROSPERO

No – the baby's mine

IT QUICKLY TURNS INTO CLASSIC PUNCH-AND-JUDY-WITH-THE-BABY TUG-OF-WAR..

PROSPERO/ANTONIO

Gimme de baby!  
No - de baby's mine.  
Gimme de baby!  
No - de baby's mine.  
She-mine She-mine She-mine She-mine She-mine  
Naughty, naughty, naughty, give-her-to-meeeee!!

THE TWO PUPPETS FIGHT. ANTONIO PUPPET TAKES THE BABY AND THROWS PROSPERO PUPPET INTO DINGHY.

ANTONIO

Into the boat, into the boat, That's the way to do it!

ARIEL

We've seen enough! Now winged thought, bear us all  
Ahead twelve years...

MIRANDA COMES FORWARD

ARIEL

...See how that child has grown...

## EXTRACT 2

FERDINAND COMES ON. HE'S AN ARISTOCRATIC LOOKING - SLIGHTLY DAMAGED BY THE STORM. HE LOOKS VERY PETULANT. MIRANDA CLOCKS HIM. SHE'S GOBSMACKED.

FERDINAND

Never again will I set out to sea!  
Not in a ship! Not in a rowing boat!  
I may well outlaw paddling after this  
I am the king's own son, and look at me!  
My hair a ruined mess - My suit destroyed -  
The sea has no respect for Royal blood!  
And then - as if a shipwreck weren't enough -  
I'm washed up on this.. ghastly little beach!

MIRANDA

There were survivors! "Not one soul" you said!

ARIEL

Your father wanted.....

MIRANDA

No – you lied to me.  
You backed him up. You two – you're just the same!

ARIEL

Please don't say that.

FERDINAND

Oh Lord - I wish Antonio were here.  
He'd tell me what to do. He always knows.  
But if I'm on my own.. My **own!!** Good God!  
What if I'm sole survivor of this wreck?...  
Who'll make my fire? Who'll cook my food for me?  
No servants!?! Doomed! I might as well have drowned!

MIRANDA STARTS TO MOVE TOWARDS FERDINAND

ARIEL

Come back, Miranda. This is a bad idea!

MIRANDA REALISES SHE'S BEEN SPOTTED. LOSES SOME OF HER CERTAINTY.

FERDINAND

Oh, thank You lord! Here's someone after all -  
Common as muck no doubt, but there you are -

HE MIMES EATING

BRING - ME - SOME - FOOD!

MIRANDA IGNORES HIM, AND WORDLESSLY APPROACHES. HE SUFFERS HER  
TO LOOK HIM UP AND DOWN, BUT WHEN SHE STARTS HANDING HIS HAIR  
AND PULLING AT HIS FACE, HE LOSES PATIENCE.

FERDINAND

Don't touch the royal face!

MIRANDA

It's smooth!

FERDINAND

I know it is. It's handsome too,  
but not for long if your rough, peasant paws  
keep pulling it about. Get off, I said!

MIRANDA

I thought all men would have my father's face.  
But yours is different.

FERDINAND

Father, did you say?  
Does he live on this island? Fetch him here.

PROSPERO APPEARS

PROSPERO

No need. He's here already.

FERDINAND

Good. Now look...

PROSPERO

Miranda, come away. Leave him alone.  
(TO ARIEL) I said this mustn't happen!

ARIEL GOES - IN SOME DISGRACE

PROSPERO (TO FERDINAND)

Now then sir...

FERDINAND

No, Shhh I'm talking now!. I want some food,  
A bath, some decent clothes, a flask of wine  
and then a boat to take me off this heap...  
And by the way, When you're addressing me  
You say "Your Majesty".

PROSPERO

My dear young sir;  
This is my island, and while you are here  
You 'll be an honoured guest, but no-one's lord.

FERDINAND

I **am** your lord, even on this sad dump.  
See this? This is the Royal seal, and I  
Am rightful heir to all it represents –  
And since you're slow, I'll point out that includes  
This heap of seagull droppings you call home!

PROSPERO

All right. I think we've heard enough from you.  
Just hold your tongue.

FERDINAND

Who's going to make me? You?

PROSPERO

If need be.

FERDINAND

Ha! I'd like to see you tr-

PROSPERO SUDDENLY RAISES HIS STAFF, IN HIS TWO HANDS, FERDINAND'S  
HAND RUSHES UP TO GRASP HIS OWN TONGUE.

MIRANDA

Father!

PROSPERO

Be silent.

MIRANDA

Why are you doing this?  
He's just survived a storm. – Leave him alone!

PROSPERO

Don't dare tell me – Go to the cave at once  
And do not show your face again until  
You're ready to obey me as you should!

MIRANDA GOES

PROSPERO (To ARIEL)

I might have known. You see what's come of this?  
Two minutes she's had human company,  
And look at her - defiant to my face!  
Well, it will pass, if she is kept away  
From him. (To FERDINAND) A Kings son? Yes. I see it now.  
You would be - Ferdinand - that was the name.  
The last time I saw you - Twelve years ago,  
You were a spoilt, ill-mannered Royal brat.  
It's good to see some things have stayed the same  
While I've been gone. Now sire - since you're my guest,  
it's up to me to keep you entertained,  
And just by chance, I have the very thing -  
I need some logs cut up to feed my fire.  
It's heavy work, but you are young and fit –  
just say if it's a problem. No? Oh good!

FERDINAND TRIES TO SPEAK BUT CAN'T  
PROSPERO GESTURES. FERDINAND FALLS FLAT, HIS TONGUE FREE.

FERDINAND

I will not do it!

PROSPERO GESTURES, FERDINAND STARTS TO ITCH UNCONTROLLABLY

PROSPERO

Sorry – what was that??

FERDINAND

All right! All right! Just stop this itching.

PROSPERO

Fine

IT STOPS. FERDINAND CONSIDERS RUSHING PROSPERO AGAIN. THEN  
THINKS BETTER OF IT, AND STUMPS OFF.

PROSPERO

Ariel, by the way, please see to it  
That he and my daughter do not meet again

ARIEL

But sir..

PROSPERO

No buts. Just do as I command.

### EXTRACT 3

*PROSPERO, angry at MIRANDA's growing attachment to FERDINAND, lets slip that he caused the storm that wrecked the young man's ship...*

PROSPERO

It's him. He's put these thoughts into your head.  
I wish I'd never brought them here..

MIRANDA

What's that?

You brought them here?

PROSPERO

I.. No!

MIRANDA

That's what you said.

No! You called up that storm. You wrecked their ship.

PROSPERO

I don't wish to discuss it.

MIRANDA

But you will.

I thought these powers you wanted were for good?  
What seeping sickness leached into your soul  
To put good magic to such wicked use?  
How can you face me? How can you face yourself?

PROSPERO

Some things it's better that you do not know.  
You wouldn't understand. You couldn't take

MIRANDA

What would you know of what I couldn't take?

SHE POINTS TO FERDINAND

MIRANDA

He's known me just a day, but even now  
He knows me better than you ever did.  
It would be funny if it weren't so sad -  
You have so many books, and every one  
Unlocks some mystery and lays it bare  
And yet, for all that, there's one volume here  
That you have barely glanced at all these years

PROSPERO

Miranda..

MIRANDA

Oh it's only small, this book.  
No great truths hidden there, no clever spells.  
Maybe that's why it's always overlooked.

PROSPERO

But not neglected. How can you say that?  
When I have moved the heaven and earth to see  
That nothing happened to my precious girl..

MIRANDA

And nothing ever did. Nothing. That's my whole point!  
When I was young I saw a butterfly -  
Chased it for a fluttering, happy hour.  
But then you raised your staff and cast a spell,  
Stilling my butterfly in frozen air.

PROSPERO

You could not catch it.

MIRANDA

No. That was the **fun!**  
You made my butterfly a joyless thing  
And now I find you even hid my past!

PROSPERO

I had to keep it from you. Don't you see?  
I've carried such a burden all these years -  
A heavy load of hate and bitterness  
I didn't want to pass that load to you.  
I ... didn't want you.. turning out like me!

MIRANDA

I would have *shared* the burden if you'd asked!

In opening up you may have found some peace  
Silence is perfect soil for hate to grow.

FERDINAND

May I speak? What you suffered years ago  
Was wrong. Appalling. That I can't deny.  
But that Antonio I never knew.  
The one I knew was selfless, honest, wise  
I don't know if it helps but many times  
I'd be there when he thought he was alone  
He'd sit there in the dark, and he would say  
His voice heavy with sadness and regret  
"A crown - it's just a zero made of gold"  
And many times, I heard him talk of you.

PROSPERO

Of me?

FERDINAND

He'd talk of you when you were young.  
A shining example of what a duke should be!  
I wish I'd seen that Prospero, in his prime!  
God-like, Majestic, loved by all he ruled  
A shame that Prospero was eclipsed by this.

PROSPERO

A shame, you say? Then blame Antonio!!  
He was the frost that blighted all my good!

FERDINAND

There's no doubt you were wronged by Antonio  
But I believe he suffered for it since.  
His conscience hounded him. I think he felt  
The constant pain of knowing what he did.

PROSPERO

He felt remorse?

FERDINAND

The moment that the crown was on his head -  
And every moment since.

A MOMENT'S HESITATION. THEN:

PROSPERO

Well, what of that?

MIRANDA

What? Has your heart compacted to a flint  
That pity cannot grow a root in it.

PROSPERO

I've waited for this moment for so long.  
Why should I pity him. He showed me none!

MIRANDA

Because you are the noble Prospero.

FERDINAND

Because inside you are the man you were.

MIRANDA

Because revenge won't burn away the hurt.  
He could regret – why can you not forgive...